

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended. Claim 8 has been added. Claims 1-8 are pending in the application. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

Applicant's counsel wishes to thank Examiner Conley for the courtesies extended during the personal interview on March 8, 2007. The following records the substance of the interview.

In the prior Office Action, claims 1-3, 5 and 7 were rejected as allegedly being anticipated by US 4, 947,500 issued to Seiler ("Seiler"). Dependent claims 4 and 6 were rejected as obvious over Seiler in view of US 4,867,140 issued to Hovis et al. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

As amended, Applicant's independent claim 1 recites a mattress system that includes a mattress in which a cavity is arranged and an expandable cushion is arranged in the cavity. A mattress protector having a defined structure is further recited. Additionally, claim 1 requires a control system operatively coupled with the expandable cushion to control an expansion and contraction of the cushion. As amended, this control is performed in order to maintain a cushion pressure in accordance with a weight of a user in proportion to a firmness of the mattress (see, for example, paragraphs 9, 46 and 51). The control system includes a fluidic pump, a fluid relief mechanism arranged to

allow fluid to escape the expandable cushion (which assists in maintaining the cushion pressure in proportion to the firmness of the mattress), and a fluid pressure switch.

As discussed during the interview, in contrast to Applicants' claimed mattress system, Seiler fails to disclose a control system as claimed. In particular, Seiler merely shows a control device 17 in block diagram form coupled to a pump 18 (see Figures 1 and 2). Seiler also states generally that valves may serve the purpose of inflating and deflating air-cushion groups (see col. 3, line 66 - col. 4, line 2). However, Seiler neither describes nor even illustrates such valves.

As noted above, Applicant's control system requires not only a fluidic pump, but also a fluid relief mechanism and a fluid pressure switch, wherein the control system controls the expansion and contraction of the cushion in order to maintain a cushion pressure in accordance with a weight of a user in proportion to a firmness of the mattress. Clearly, Seiler does not describe or suggest such a control system, nor does Seiler utilize a fluid pressure switch and fluid relief mechanism. Indeed, a fluid pressure switch is a known term of art, and cannot be met by the generic "valves" mentioned in Seiler.

Moreover, Seiler's control device 17 does not maintain a cushion pressure in accordance with a weight of a user in proportion to a firmness of the mattress.

Indeed, Seiler teaches away from doing that as it is Seiler's intention to continually cycle the air pressure in the various cushion groups in order to move the patient into different positions in order to reduce stress due to body weight and prevent decubitus ulcers (see, for example, col. 4, lines 33-38). Thus, rather than describing a control system to maintain a cushion pressure relative to the mattress firmness to avoid an uncomfortable mattress system, Seiler teaches doing just the opposite, i.e., vary the cushion pressure in order to push the patient into different positions on the mattress. Seiler has a completely different objective than that of the present invention.

In addition to the above, Applicant further incorporates the arguments in favor of patentability set forth in the prior replies directed toward the structure of the mattress itself and the mattress protector.

Applicants respectfully submit claim 1 is patentable over Seiler, whether taken alone or in combination with Hovis et al.

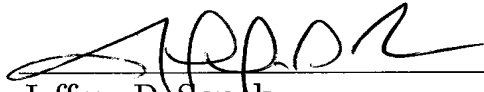
Regarding newly added claim 8, Applicant recites a mattress system incorporating the control system as discussed above. Accordingly, claim 8 should also be patentable for the reasons set forth above. An early notice to that effect, and allowance of pending claims 1-8, are respectfully requested.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #010628.50474C3).

Respectfully submitted,

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